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ABSTRACT

As a plausible explanation of Negro academic underachievement, culture conflict has been ignored by educators and social scientists to a degree not indicated by the wide range of evidence which points to its importance as a contributing factor. Reasons suggested for this theoretical imbalance can be summarized by saying that it has been controversial to use a cultural-difference model in dealing with American Negroes, and it is likely to remain so in the future. This poses a dilemma for those who want to help Negro children achieve satisfactorily in school. If cultural differences between Negroes and whites account at least in part for their different school performance, it is unlikely that efforts to raise the level of Negro academic achievement will be successful as long as cultural factors are ignored. For awhile, however, most social scientists will probably prefer to stay within the bounds of environmentalism in their search for the causes of Negro academic underachievement. The social penalties for failing with an environmental-difference model are still less severe than those which accompany success with a genetic-difference or cultural-difference model. (Author/NH)

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DESIGNS AND PROPOSAL FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD RESEARCH: A NEW LOOK: THE UNACKNOWLEDGED ROLE OF CULTURE CONFLICT IN NEGRO EDUCATION

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The Unacknowledged Role of Culture Conflict in Negro Education

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INTRODUCTION

Among the myriad social problems which can beset a complex society, even the most unwanted ones may continue on indefinitely if their causes remain unidentified or if the means of dealing with them do not become available. Yet social problems with known causes and ready solutions also may remain unresolved, if decision makers in the society feel that the effects of the problems would be less difficult to cope with than their underlying causes. In other words, while some social problems are chronic because the society in which they occur is unable to resolve them, others are chronic only because the society is unwilling to resolve them.

If many of the "chronic" social problems in the United States should turn out to be of the voluntary type, this should not be too surprising, considering the many reasons why the nation's policy makers, among others, might prefer not to deal directly with the primary causes of each and every social problem which comes to their attention. Short-term economic considerations could be important in this regard, as when the selective granting of limited assistance to the victims of some social inequity would come to a fraction of the calculated cost of eliminating that inequity, and yet would be effective in mollifying discontent over it. And immediate political considerations might be even more difficult for policy makers to resist. What could they be expected to do, for example, if the eradication of a particular social problem would require more institutional change than the society at large, or their own superiors, would be likely to welcome?

Finally, although they might not always be readily apparent, psychosocial factors can have a profound effect on how thoroughly, and in what manner, a society will be willing to deal with its internal problems. For example, social scientists would probably hesitate to recommend, or policy makers to implement, or the public to accept even the most functionally effective solution for a particular social problem, if the means required by that solution happen to conflict with the values of their society. Thus, while from a purely amoral point of view extermination or forceful oppression might seem to be efficient means for dealing with troublesome social elements, a democratic and humanitarian society might prefer to tolerate the problems created by such elements rather than employ these means against them. Or, conversely, an authoritarian and fiercely competitive society might reject benign measures for dealing with troublesome elements within it, even though such measures might actually be adequate for the purpose.

To the extent that the values of a society are moralistic conventions, specifying the "right" and "wrong" ways for its members to behave, their effect on the treatment of internalized social problems ought to be manifest more in the actions of the society's policy makers than in the theories of its social scientists. But, in their sum, social values include more than moral tenets; among other things, they include the beliefs and expectations which the members of a society hold with respect to the nature of the society itself -- in a term, the social self-image. And if the social morality can affect the way internal social problems are handled by policy makers, the social self-image can affect how such problems are conceptualized, not only by policy makers, but also by social scientists who provide the etiologies. This is because the self-images of societies, like those of individuals, are idealistic constructs rather than realistic descriptions. Thus, it is quite possible for certain problematic characteristics of a society to receive absolutely no recognition in the idealized image which its members have of it, just as it is possible for that image to include certain enviable traits which are in fact difficult to

find in the real society. Now, if a society were to be afflicted with an internal problem deriving from some characteristic or characteristics not recognized in its self-image, then that society's policy makers and social scientists would be able to conceptualize the problem accurately only to the extent that they, as likely members of the society's ideological establishment, would be willing to question or deny a social mythos which might well be virtually one with their own social ideology.

Of course, conflicts between what men can observe about themselves and what society has taught them to believe about themselves are by no means limited to the social sciences. They can occur in practically any attempt by man to study and evaluate man. They can even occur in the realm of purely physiological studies, and involve the self-image of the species, as when the comparative biological and paleontological evidence produced by early studies of human phylogenetics clearly linked man in an evolutionary chain to lower forms of life and thereby challenged a pre-scientific image which much of mankind had developed of itself as the isolated and deliberate creation of a Supreme Being. The persistence of the cherished self-image, one might argue, was due less to the fact that evolutionary theory conflicted with a popular self-image than that it conflicted with the formal tenets of several established religions. It is significant, however, that the opponents of the theory criticized it less for disagreeing with holy writ than for being degrading to man.[1]

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1. Further supporting the suspicion that the self-image of homo sapiens was an important factor in the opposition to evolutionary theory is the fact that there was little comparable debate over equally anti-Creation theories which science offered regarding the origin and development of the earth.

To the extent that the early philogeneticists were faced with a conflict between what their observations showed them to be so and what the general public (and even many of academic peers) expected them to say was so, their dilemma was a precursor to that of many modern social scientists. But the similarity ends there because the early evolutionists were scientific revolutionaries to an extent which few social scientists would dare to equal today. Far from being intimidated by the threat of public disfavor, the forerunners of evolution seemed to thrive on it. They stood their ground from the start, rapidly moved to an offensive posture, and eventually won widespread acceptance of their theory -- partly (and it must be admitted that this may explain their general willingness to engage in the battle in the first place) because the only authority to which their opposition could appeal, the Bible as literally interpreted, was already falling into popular as well as scholarly disrepute, particularly as a source of explanations for natural phenomena.

If the public-opinion-be-damned stance of the early evolutionists is seldom emulated by scientists of the present day, it can be said in defense of the latter that their situation is in many ways different from that of their evolutionist predecessors. For one thing, the issues involved in the Evolution vs. Creation controversy were more clear cut, and the data more conclusive, than has since been the rule when scientists have had to select from among competing hypotheses. Furthermore, the scientist of a century or more ago had a very different relationship to his peers and to the public than that which generally holds for scientists -- especially social scientists -- today. Most of the earlier scientists were gentlemen of the more privileged classes, and sometimes rather brilliant and famous ones at that, so that they always had the social respect of peer and plowman alike -- irrespective of their ideologies. In addition, these earlier scientists were likely to be independently wealthy or privately endowed, and thus were relatively well insulated from the financial consequences of public disfavor.

In contrast, most modern scientists live and work in more or less egalitarian societies, in which aristocratic

origin is no guarantee of respect by professional peers. In further contrast, the modern social scientist is often supported out of public funds and, if not actually teaching or doing research at a university, he is likely to be employed in some politically-sensitive public service. All in all, this makes him rather vulnerable (and therefore sensitive) to the public and professional acceptability of his work. But there is at least one other way in which the attitude of modern social scientists toward professional and public opinion may differ from that of natural scientists of the 19th century, and this has to do with the relationship of the two types of scientists to their respective societies and their values. For, as highly individualistic (and, occasionally, rather eccentric) types, the 19th century scientists often strayed in their social thought far from the accepted truths of the overall society. Judged against the values of their society, the social philosophy of these scientists was often nonconformist, and sometimes even revolutionary. But the modern social scientist is very much a part of the society in which he lives. He will come from its middle class, if not from the working class (only rarely from the elite), and he will very probably share at least the mainstream values of that society. If he innovates, it is likely to be in relatively refined and technical ways; if he advocates social reform, it is likely to be in terms of the more progressive values of his society, rather than in terms of values entirely foreign or antithetical to the society. Finally, because of improved communications and a more enlightened populace, the modern social scientist has another alternative to standing against public opinion -- that of influencing it. If this alternative enhances his individual power somewhat, it also imposes certain social constraints on the form and direction his efforts may take. It is this relationship which was referred to earlier when it was pointed out that social scientists are often part of their own society's ideological establishment.

In recent history, there have been a number of cases in which the intellectual symbiotic relationship between social scientists and the societies in which they live has placed serious constraints on the theoretical alternatives which the

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scientists could consider in dealing with the problems of those societies. Since this dilemma would be almost certain to characterize a society which is organized around a strong controlling ideology, it is not surprising that one of the most dramatic examples of it comes from the Communist world. In a Communist state, a fundamental tenet of the socio-political ideology or (to reinstate a more comprehensive term used earlier in this paper) of the social self-image is the belief that, as a presumably successful socialist society, it is a classless society. To even suggest that a particular Communist state is not completely classless is, in terms of the defensive mechanisms of the ideology or the self-image, to question the success of the Socialist Revolution which led to the formation of that state and, by implication, of other Communist states. In a larger sense, to hypothesize that social-class stratification might still exist in a particular Communist state, or might have been reintroduced, is to deny the efficacy of Communism as a viable political system and to open the door to Revisionism and counter-revolution. It should be obvious that, under such a system, social scientists cannot freely admit to or even search for a class system or its remnants. Thus, when the Yugoslavian Milovan Djilas charged that a "new class" (also the title of his book) had arisen in his country under Communism, he was severely punished for his effort. But, for present purposes, the plight of Djilas is less interesting than the attitude of other Communist social scientists to his hypothesis. Clearly, many who opposed Djilas did so because they were sincerely committed to the established social self-image. The point here is not that Djilas was right and his professional critics wrong (if indeed that was the case), but rather that the commitment of many if not most Communist social scientists to an established social ideology led them to treat an empirically plausible hypothesis which happened to conflict with that ideology as if it were anti-social scientism. What his governmentment did to Djilas, using the condemnation of his fellow social scientists as a justification, is well known.

Now, one might argue in opposition to the foregoing example that it is unreasonable to infer the possibility of

contamination of social-scientific thought by social ideology from what can go on in a highly authoritarian society. But the Communist example is only one, and if it has been given first it is more because the process under consideration is unmistakably apparent in it than because it can stand by itself as an example of what might happen to social scientists in any type of society. The next example does, however, come from a much less authoritarian society -- at least insofar as the political control of its social scientists is concerned.

Despite the fact that it was the last country in the Western Hemisphere to abolish slavery, Brazil acquired an early reputation for good relations between the races. This seemingly contradictory situation is explained by the fact that judgments about race relations in Brazil were based more on observations of interpersonal relations between blacks, whites, and browns, than their legal relationship to each other. By the late 1930's (a comfortable half-century after emancipation), the image of Brazil as a racial democracy had even been adopted by the Brazilians themselves -- so much so, in fact, that the belief became the basis for an entire school of Brazilian social anthropology, presided over by the social historian Gilberto Freyre. Gross inequities in opportunity and achievement between blacks and whites in Brazil did exist, however, and these were sometimes pointed out by heretical sociologists in Sao Paulo. Could it be, some of them asked, that race relations in Brazil were not as ideal as the popular image of the country assumed? The response of the Freyre school was that such inequities did indeed exist, but that they were due, not to racial prejudice, but rather to class prejudice; it just happened that, because of the recentness of slavery, Brazilian Negroes were still predominantly lower class, and suffered accordingly. This explanation was so congenial to the popular social self-image of Brazil as a racial democracy (albeit a class-ridden one) that it was generally accepted by Brazilian social scientists as the only reasonable way to account for black-white hostilities and inequities. So extreme was the egalitarianism of the Freyre school that it even refused to accept the idea that blacks, whites, and (nontribal) Indians were culturally

different from each other. In a nation in which African, European, and Amerindian cultural patterns were still too apparent to be convincingly denied, Freyre and his students dismissed them as potential bases for race prejudice by the ingenious argument that, although such diverse cultural traits did exist in Brazil, they were now more or less randomly distributed throughout the tri-racial Brazilian population. And, since the Freyre school had by then become the semi-official voice of the Brazilian social self-image, this explanation, too, was taken as unquestionable scientific fact. As a result of this social-scientific commitment to the national self-image, it became almost unthinkable for a Brazilian social scientist to investigate, or even to hypothesize, the possible existence of racism in Brazil. When a visiting American sociologist, who spent two years doing field work in Bahia in the 1930's, finally published a study of the Negro in Brazil in which he suggested the existence of a mild form of racial prejudice (Pierson, 1942), his work was greeted with a storm of protest from Brazilian social scientists. Unable to refute his facts, they questioned his interpretations by insisting that, since he was not Brazilian, he had been unable to interpret his findings correctly. (More likely, because he was not a Brazilian, he was not committed to the national self-image, and therefore could interpret his findings correctly.) Even to the present day, most Brazilian social scientists still insist on using a pristine social-class model for explaining what any outsider can see to be racial conflicts and cultural differences within the society.

A final example of essentially the same process at work involves the treatment of the Negro within the framework of American education and the social sciences, and thus leads directly into the theme of the present paper. The social sciences under consideration will be those which theoretically have the most to contribute to the perspective and content of Negro education in the United States -- specifically, psychology,

sociology, and anthropology. [2] After a brief summary of the views of these disciplines, a final section will be devoted to the findings of linguistics as they pertain to the issue of Negro speech and education and to the unacknowledged role of cultural conflict in Negro education.

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2. As used throughout the present paper, the term "Negro education" does not have the specialized meaning it is sometimes given of racially segregated and administratively separated formal schooling for Negroes. Rather, it is used in the more comprehensive sense of the formal education of American Negroes, whether in segregated or integrated schools.

SOCIAL SCIENCE AND EDUCATIONAL VIEWPOINTS ON THE AMERICAN NEGRO

In order to see why the social sciences have dealt with the American Negro in their particular (and often peculiar) way, it is important to understand that the social scientists in these disciplines have been attempting to deal with American Negroes less than they have been attempting to deal with the American "Negro Problem." Many aspects of this problem (which of course is not the deliberate fault of the Negro, no matter how much the terminology may make it sound that way) are well known, and should need no review. The issue here is not whether or not there is a problem, but rather what that problem entails and why it has been approached the way it has by most American social scientists. To this end, it is worthwile to examine any possible relationship between the scientific treatment of the Negro as a problematic element within American society on the one hand and, on the other, any aspects of the American social self-image which might influence the perceptions of social scientists with respect to the Negro's role within the national society.

In examining the American social self-image for potential influences on the posture of American social scientists toward the "Negro problem", two aspects emerge as especially worthy of attention. One of these is a belief (or, perhaps, a realization) that America is a strongly racist society, and the other is a belief that America is a highly successful cultural melting pot.[3] Although these two beliefs may appear to be

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3. It should not be inferred from references throughout this paper to <u>the</u> American social self-image that all Americans share a single set of beliefs and expectations regarding their society. Rather, it is clear that the set varies in its content according to age, sex, ethnicity, socio-economic status, regional upbringing, and political persuasion, at the very least. But to admit to variations in the social self-image of Americans is not to suggest that its potential effect on theory and practice in the American social sciences

somewhat contradictory when stated consecutively, they are really quite compatible. In the case of the American Negro, for example, it is quite possible to maintain that he was discriminated against because of his physical differences, and yet was allowed (even encouraged) to give up his original African ways entirely and to become culturally identical to American whites. But if the Negro had become culturally white, then the discrimination which was directed against him could not be motivated by behavioral differences (and therefore cross-cultural misunderstandings) between Negroes and whites; it had to be motivated by non-behavioral differences, such as skin color. Thus one can see that, in order for the belief in an essentially racist America to co-exist with the belief in a culturally homogeneous America, racism had to be defined as an irrational attitude of hostility directed toward people who are only physically different, or who are different only in some other non-behavioral way (such as religious affiliation, etc.). And, even more than its technical use to refer to a belief in the

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will be trivial. Indeed, it has been precisely this variability in the American self-image which has caused numerous problems for American historians (Pierce, 1926). At times, they have been put under intense pressure by various social and political interest-groups to have their interpretations of American history conform to the often-conflicting national self-images of such groups. Yet, even those historians (usually writers of textbooks) who have given in to such pressures have simply found it impossible to satisfy the proponents of each and every view of America and its past. In terms of the issues under discussion in the present paper, however, variations in the American social self-image can truly be said to be minimal; almost all Americans consider their nation to be (or to have recently been) a racistic society at the same time that they also consider it to be a rather successful cultural melting pot. Most importantly, these aspects of the American social self-image are now shared by Negroes and whites.

behavioral effects of genetic differences, it is in the sense of non-behaviorally-motivated attitudes that the term racism is now most frequently used in the social science (as well as popular) literature on American race relations.

There remains, of course, the vexing problem of explaining observable behavioral differences between American Negroes and whites in terms of these beliefs. For, if the American melting-pot mechanism did away with the original cultural differences between African slaves and European colonists, then behavioral differences between present-day Negroes and whites could hardly be a continuation of those older cultural differences in modern America; either they are genetically determined, or they are environmentally determined. At first, this choice might seem to pose something of a dilemma for the socially progressive intellectual, since the suggestion of a genetic basis for behavioral differences between Negroes and whites encourages the conclusion that the Negro is inferior, while the assumption of an environmental basis for such differences can easily lead to the conclusion that the Negro environment -- and therefore Negro behavior -- is pathological. But since the recent concern over the American "Negro Problem" has been directed toward assessing blame as much as finding solutions, the view of racism as a behaviorally-unmotivated (and therefore morally unjustifiable) phenomenon makes the choice of hypotheses rather easy. Racism can be suggested as the environmental factor which has produced the Negro's distinctive behavioral traits. Thus, while the pathology is assigned to the Negro, the guilt for that pathology is assigned to the white.

The Anthropological Viewpoint

Now, it is not surprising that many American sociologists and psychologists should thus have concluded that psychopathologies rather than cultural differences accounted for behavioral deviations between American Negroes and whites and, by extension, that social attitudes rather than

culture conflicts were at the bottom of American race relations. What is indeed surprising is that most American anthropologists seemed to concur in this conclusion. That they did so is revealed, not only by the fact that few anthropologists bothered to study American Negroes, but also by the fact that they failed to react critically to sociological definitions of racism and psychological explanations of Negro behavioral "deviations", even though neither of these made allowance in their etiologies for the possibiiity of a cultural-difference basis. Rather, at least until the mid 1960's, most American anthropologists remained highly skeptical of the relevance of a culture-conflict model for explaining interactional problems between Negroes and whites, or between Negroes and mainstream institutions. Although Herskovits' Myth of the Negro Past (1941) is now accepted as the first comprehensive statement of an African-Caribbean-Negro-American cultural continuity, the author then stood virtually alone among anthropologists in insisting upon the existence and historical legitimacy of Afro-American culture. And while his own attacks on racism made it difficult for Herskovits' colleagues to dismiss him as a racist, he was considered a mystic by many for years after his death in 1963.

Although the skepticism of American anthropologists regarding the possibility of cultural differences between American Negroes and whites may seem unreasonable in the light of the recent surge of interest in this area, the older anthropological attitude was but a natural consequence of various intellectual and social pressures to which American anthropologists were subjected during the first half-century of their discipline's existence. This can be demonstrated by mentioning only four pressures -- two of which emanated from within their own discipline, and two of which were part of the ideology of the national society.

Within American anthropology, the two intellectual pressures which affected students and senior scholars alike were a preference for the exotic in cultural studies, and an emphasis on the institutional in cultural description. Both

were characteristics of anthropology's early comparative tradition, which developed from the cumulative description of societies (such as American Indian tribal groups) which, at the time of observation, were still relatively unaffected by European ways. Cultures of this type were deliberately sought out by the early anthropologists whose interest in the "primitive" was motivated, not only by romanticism, but also by a belief that human social universals were most likely to be revealed in the simpler, non-technological societies. The study of exotic cultures was quick and easy, too, since striking differences between the cultural norms of those under observation on the one hand, and those of the anthropologist, his peers, and his readership on the other, made for a descriptive situation in which ample amounts of contrastive data could be culled from even the most cursory investigation. This in turn led to a general acceptance of shallow comparisons, in which formalized (and therefore readily visible) institutions carried an inordinate amount of comparative weight. Under such circumstances, it was easy for anthropologists to misinterpret a rather superficial kind of acculturation, in which formal indigenous institutions were replaced by (or redefined as) European ones, as profound cultural change. Thus, even where Africans had assimilated only superficially to European norms (e.g., in Haiti), they were still regarded by most anthropologists as having become almost completely de-Africanized. Since New World Negroes no longer seemed to talk like Africans, or to preserve their older tribal identities, it somehow meant nothing that they still did not talk or behave quite like Englishmen, Frenchmen, white Americans, or other New-World-European types. Finally, in this regard, it seems probable that the anthropological preference for exotic cultural patterns tended to dull the investigator's sensitivity to more subtle cultural differences which, nevertheless, might be quite important.

The two other pressures upon anthropologists were the familiar beliefs that American society was by nature racistic, yet assimilationist. Tormented by the realization that there is racism in American society, the nation's anthropologists have spent decades in a self-conscious and guilt-laden effort

to live it down. For the anthropologists, part of the problem was that non-professionals had already preempted the kind of data on Negro-white behavioral differences which they would have gathered, and had used this data to support racism rather than to refute it. These non-professionals (who, despite their questionable interpretations, were rather good observers) were none other than the slaveholders themselves. Favored with excellent opportunities to observe the behavior of "their" Negroes, many slaveholders were able to set down an impressive inventory of what they held (usually correctly) to be distinctively Negro behavioral patterns. But, since these same slaveholders were believers in an ethnocentric view of social behavior which held European norms to be the most advanced, they saw the non-European behaviors of their slaves as evidence of Negro social or intellectual retardation. Thus, in their literary defenses of their institution, these slaveholders filled page after page with meticulous descriptions of Negro behaviors (many of which eventually became incorporated into the Plantation Negro stereotype), in order to broadcast the Negro's inferiority and to justify their caretaker status over him. A striking example of this kind of pro-slavery anthropology is furnished by the writings of a West Indian slaveholder's wife (Carmichael, 1833), from which five selected excerpts will be given <u>seriatim</u>:

> Children [of the slaves] who are too young to be employed, are all brought up by women, whose sole office is to take care of them.
>
> I have seen a negro nurse quite proud of her little [slave] charges, -- teaching them to make a curtsy, and answer politely; and she always keeps them good humoured, by dancing and singing to them.
>
> The youngest negro, almost as soon as it can stand, begins to dance and sing in its own way. As they get older, they improve in both of these native accomplishments: some of them have a very quick ear for music.

I have in the first volume of this work spoken of the care of negro children; and of the nurses who are appointed to look after them upon all estates . . . At Laurel-Hill, we are very well off in this respect. Patience, was really patient, both by name and nature; and many a song and dance, she sang and danced to the "little niggers," as she called them; and when one or two began first to walk, she was as proud as possible to exhibit them, and all the little tricks she had taught them.

It may almost be said, that [adult] negro recreation is comprised in the one word, dancing.

From one point of view, the foregoing quotations are offensive in the extent to which they attempt to stereotype the Negro as music-loving (and therefore childish, even as an adult), and happy under slavery. From another point of view, however, the same observations are superb anthropology; they furnish a beautiful description of the socialization of Negro children into an Afro-American orientation toward song and the dance.

Eventually, such descriptions of distinctively Negro behavioral patterns became so closely associated with an anti-Negro position that it was no longer possible for even sophisticated Americans to separate fact from fancy, or observations from interpretations, in writings of this sort. The way liberal Americans resolved this problem was by completely rejecting the Plantation Negro stereotype as a racist invention, and by regarding any claims of Negro-white behavioral differences as manifestations of overt or latent racism.

For these reasons, anthropologists tended to avoid gathering the kind of data on American Negroes (and, in fact, on all other American ethnic groups, save the American Indian)

which would have caused them to question the validity of the melting-pot ideal. Instead, anthropologists were happy to point with others to the Negro as the most dramatic evidence of the success of the melting-pot mechanism.[4]

If American social scientists were unwilling to recognize cultural differences between Negroes and whites, they were certainly in no position to suggest to educators that such differences might be a factor in the low academic achievement of Negro children on curricula originally developed for whites. Instead, Negro education was left to find its own way through the complicated maze of unrelated and seldom understood experiences which eventually led to the realization that, whatever might be the reason, there did seem to be a difference in the curriculum needs of black and white children.

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4. The long avoidance by American anthropologists of the study of American Negroes has been documented and criticized by Ackerman (1960). Like that of the present paper, Ackerman's conclusion is that most anthropologists subordinated the perspectives and techniques of their discipline to the socio-political ideology of their society. Ironically, Ackerman himself shows a certain amount of responsiveness to the current beliefs of his own period. He wrote slightly before the reawakening of an awareness of the African heritage in black America, and thus failed to fully appreciate the importance of Herskovits as a student of the New World Negro, or of African survivals in New World Negro culture. None of these faults, however, detract from Ackerman's thesis as a study of how social ideologies can stultify social science.

The Negro Education Viewpoint

As a continuous tradition, the public education of Negro children in the United States can be said to have begun with the voluntary schools which were set up in conquered regions of the South during the Civil War by the American Missionary Association, and later by other private organizations and the Freedmen's Bureau, a government agency. The writings of the volunteer teachers constitute an informative record of what went on in those early schools for Negroes. They were the first (and, for an entire century, the last) to tell of the excitement and reward in teaching Negro youngsters, and they were the first to indicate the problems which were later to plague all who became involved in Negro education. In the volunteer teachers' diaries, frustration is greatly outweighed by excitement and hope, while in the scholarly literature on Negro education after Emancipation, the excitement is missing and the hope is less genuine. Instead, the later literature is obsessed with problems. But the problems dealt with are seldom the problems of Negro pupils; they are instead the problems of teachers and administrators. Most of this literature deals almost exclusively with the institutional aspects, and those problems which emerge are usually administrative and financial in nature. It is difficult to say whether it was the emphasis on institutional problems which gave rise to the widespread belief that more money and better organization would bring Negro academic achievement up to national standards, or whether both the literature and the belief were products of an age in which it was felt that anything could be accomplished through buying power and organizational efficiency. At any rate, after the Freedmen-school diaries, little is said about academic performance and what actually went on inside the classrooms of Negro schools. Part of this silence undoubtedly reflects the obvious concern for the Negro public image which runs through the literature. That there were endemic problems in Negro scholastic achievement is related only indirectly -- such as by repeated calls for

improved training and administration, better buildings, and more funds for books. Even Horace Mann Bond devotes only a sentence or two to low academic achievement in his monumental study, The Education of the Negro in the American Social Order (1934), and this he manages to do administratively by reference to an "over-ageness" factor (i.e., the greater age of Negro children, compared to white children, at a given grade level).

The Psychometric Position

For a reason which may or may not be related to hereditary intellectual differences, the comparative data on Negro and white performance on IQ tests has turned out to be a source of much indirect information on Negro versus white academic achievement. The reason is that, regardless of the real cause of Negro-white performance differences, IQ tests are so much like academic achievement tasks that it is reasonable to assume that performance on one should reflect performance on the other. Indeed, the one point on which practically everyone agrees is that IQ tests do predict academic achievement fairly well. Viewed in this way, the comparative IQ evidence suggests that the academic achievement level in Negro schools has been significantly below the white level all along, even when age, sex, region, socioeconomic status, and a host of other variables are controlled. Although it would be preferable to base such a conclusion directly on comparative data on Negro-white academic aachievement covering several decades, this kind of information is simply not available either in sufficient quantity or at an adequate level of refinement in the IQ studies. Nevertheless, in a number of cases in which actual classroom achievement problems have been noted, there is striking correspondence with the IQ data. For example, many observers of Freedmen's school classes during the Civil War commented on what they felt to be a striking difference between Negro and white mental aptitutes. To use the words of one New England observer who visited Freedmen's schools all over the South, "In those studies which appeal to the imagination and memory, the colored pupil excels. In those which exercise the reflective and reasoning facilities,

he is less proficient" (Trowbridge, 1866). Another observer during the same period commented similarly that Negro children were better at memory than at judgment, while one of the volunteer teachers complained that Negro children apprehended and held detached facts easily, but were slow to comprehend them in connection (Donald, 1952). One is tempted to compare these observations with recent experimental data suggesting that lower class Negro children do better on "associative" (i.e., rote) learning, while middle class white children do better on "cognitive" or "conceptual" (i.e., abstract) learning. Of course, there is a class variable as well as a racial variable in this experiment, as there may well have been in the early observations of the New England travelers (who might have been comparing the Negro slave children with white middle class children back home). But, regardless, it seems obvious that these represent two sources of evidence -- one through direct (though impressionistic) observation, and the other through performance on an intelligence test -- of what must be the same phenomenon. The fact that these observations are separated by one hundred years is as significant as it is dramatic.

While a difference in the intellectual performance of different segments of the population may not be of any practical importance in highly stratified or non-technological societies, it can have serious consequences in a technological society committed to the right of all its members to social mobility through equalized economic opportunity. If not adjusted or compensated for somewhere in the educative process, such a difference might fetter the social mobility of one group, while promoting that of another, through its effect on the groups' relative competitive ability in the national economic system. Thus, despite all good intentions, the schools would really be in the awkward position of reinforcing existing social inequities, rather than promoting greater social mobility.

Applying the foregoing generalities to Negro-white differences in performance on IQ tests and in scholastic achievement (whether the first causes the second, the second causes

the first, or both reflect some other factor), one would expect American educators to have been keenly interested from the start in these phenomena, their description, measurement, and diagnosis. Yet, when actually confronted with evidence of such differences, most educators (just as many social scientists, and for essentially the same reasons) have preferred to respond in terms of strategies which seem intended more to explain away the phenomenon than to explain it; more to resolve the problem than to solve it.

The earliest of these strategies was the evaluation of Negro and white intellectual performance in terms of an unabashed double standard. The belief, once respectable even among professionals, that the Negro was at a lower level of mental and social development than the white allowed any apparent difference between them in intellectual performance to be accepted as natural and (in the short run, at least) immutable.

Although the double standard has continued to the present day to serve educators as a primary strategy for accomodating Negro-white differences in academic achievement, changes in the prevailing beliefs about the causes of these differences have necessitated occasional changes in the justification given for the double standard. Thus, as the belief in the innate mental inferiority of the Negro began to wane in popularity, at least among educators, and was replaced by the theory that low Negro academic achievement was simply due to the Negro's lack of familiarity with the complexities of freedom (including responsible thought and action), the continued application of the double standard was upheld on the grounds that it served as a temporary device for insuring fairness to the Negro while he passed through the difficult transition from slave to citizen.

A full half-century after Emancipation, however, significant Negro-white differences in performance on the Army Alpha (an early IQ test) made it clear that something more tenacious than chattel status was involved. But, if some psychologists were ready to accept such evidence, others were not. The

socio-political issues of American egalitarianism (requiring a strongly anti-racist stand combined with a whole-hearted commitment to the melting-pot myth) began to mix with the methodological issues of research design, and in fact stronger commitments seemed to be made to the former than to the latter. Ironically, the very concepts which played such a significant part in the measurement of Negro-white IQ differences could, in the hands of a skilled debater, also be used to refute those measurements. Norms and means were attacked and defended, variables were identified and questioned, issues of sampling and standardization were raised, settled, and raised again, and overlaps were pitted against deviations. In a short while, there was so much confusion on the matter of Negro-white differences in IQ that it was difficult for the layman or educator to understand the issues, and virtually impossible to make a responsible decision based on them. One important result of the debate over the meaning of apparent racial differences in intelligence was the beginning of the "nature vs. nurture" argument, in which the theory that mental and behavioral traits were largely determined by heredity was challenged by the theory that such differences had very little to do with heredity, and were affected much more directly by the organism's environment.

The Environmental Model and Its Impact

Although the potential bombshell of Negro-white IQ differences was thus defused (though only temporarily, as it turned out), the debate over the issue had, for many, shifted the focus on basic causes from hereditary to acquired traits, and therefore from racial-group membership to activities in the home and school. Notice was in effect being served on educators that chronically poor academic achievement among Negroes would have to be dealt with much more directly. Of course, other trends in American society also helped to bring about the shift from a concern with differences in mental

traits to a concern with success in the educative process. The economy was becoming increasingly technological and, although more sophistication was required from the potential labor force, it was also possible to be more explicit about what that sophistication should entail in terms of knowledge and skills. Within education, a methodological revolution was also taking place -- largely under the influence of psychological theory -- in which the older emphasis on intellectual discipline and the acquisition of a carefully specified (and often highly impractical) fund of knowledge was replaced by an emphasis on the teaching of maximally-generalizable cognitive processes. (Ironically, this change in educational methodology was eventually to exacerbate the issue of Negro-white intellectual differences, but that was not readily apparent at the time.) In the newer diagnosis of low Negro academic achievement, it was therefore natural for the trouble to be sought in variations in the quality of their education.

Quality education for Negroes, it is important to note, was then (as now) defined in universal terms of what all children should need (e.g., fully accredited and adequately paid teachers, agreeable and efficient school structures, etc.), rather than in terms of the specific (and perhaps unique) needs of Negro children. But even in this universal sense, it was painfully obvious that the quality of Negro education throughout the nation was woefully below that of whites -- a fact which seemed to furnish in itself a rather full explanation of why Negroes did not perform academically as well as whites. It followed that the remedy for disparate Negro-white academic achievement (and probably for what seemed like racial differences in IQ as well) was to equalize the quality of education for Negroes and whites. But in the South, containing as it did a majority of the nation's Negroes, this meant equalizing the expenditures, building requirements, teaching credentials, and a host of other variables in two separate educational systems. A conviction, shared by many educators, that this could never be accomplished became one of the major forces in the drive to end racial segregation in the nation's schools.

With the Supreme Court's celebrated decision on Brown vs. Board of Education in 1954, declaring racially-segregated public schools to be unconstitutional, the way was opened to bring large numbers of Negro and white children together in a combined educational venture. Black and white children were not only to share the same physical school environment, but they were to be taught together in terms of a single curriculum and be evaluated as to their scholastic achievement in terms of a single set of standards. Since (as will be pointed out later) the curriculum for Negro and white children was much the same under the old dual system, the most significant changes wrought by integration, insofar as the teaching process was concerned, were better physical and personnel services for Negro children and -- most importantly -- the abolition of the older double standard by which the achievement of Negro and white children on similar curricula was evaluated.

Although the Brown decision was actively resisted in many areas, it did prove possible to integrate a sufficient number of schools quickly enough so that, by the end of the first decade following the Court ruling, a considerable amount of data was available on the effect of integration on Negro academic achievement. For those who, like most authorities on Negro education, had placed great hopes in the ability of massive doses of money and resources to improve the academic achievement of Negro children, the results of such inputs accompanying integration were bitterly disappointing. Even the belief that, with school resources held constant, Negro children would benefit scholastically from exposure to white classmates proved to be true in only certain qualified ways. On the other hand, the evaluation of the academic performance of Negro and white children by means of the same criteria sometimes highlighted differences in academic achievement between them which would have been absorbed by the double standard under the old system.

The Genetic-Difference Model

As the number of Negro children in previously all-white schools grew, so did a body of data and impressions which, rein-

forced by similar data and evidence from inner-city schools in the North, told of chronically low Negro academic achievement which seemed frustratingly immune to efforts at racial integration of the schools, as well as to quality control of the educative process. It was then that one began to hear suggestions (reminiscent of the 19th century) that, whatever the causes of low Negro academic achievement, they must have more to do with the intellectual characteristics of Negroes than with the efficiency of their schools. Once again, the focus had reverted to Negro intellectual ability. Soon, theories were advanced which echoed earlier ones in ascribing poor Negro scholastic achievement to deficient cognitive skills, if not to genetic inferiority.

To a great extent these new theories have turned out to be recapitulations of those which characterized the earlier debate on the meaning of Negro-white IQ differences. The old "nature vs. nurture" discussions have been revitalized, thus providing researchers with two theoretical models to explain apparent differences in intellectual ability -- a genetic-difference model which assumes that behavior is largely determined by basic genetic potential and only minimally affected by environment, and an environmental-difference model, which assumes that behavior is largely determined by one's early life experiences.

For reasons which have already been discussed, anthropologists have vociferously opposed (perhaps too strongly, according to Ackerman, 1960) any and all applications of the genetic-difference model to the academic achievement problems of American minorities, but have remained totally uncritical of continued applications of the environmental-difference model to the same groups. Yet there is often less anthropological sophistication in the latter than in the former. For example, environmental-difference models which attempt to blame low academic achievement on poor socialization in the home often assume that parents are absolutely necessary as teaching agents and role models for the child. Yet, it is anthropologically commonplace that children may learn from other children, and may use persons other than their parents as "parental" models. The same goes for the frequently encountered assumption that parents who do not verbally

coach their children are contributing to their cognitive deprivation. Actually, children are quite capable of acquiring highly complicated systems of behavior through mere observation -- which may be one reason why verbal coaching is quite absent from the learning and teaching styles used in many of the world's societies (Baratz and Baratz, 1970).

A LINGUISTIC VIEWPOINT

Of all the possible anthropological weaknesses in the environmental model of low Negro academic achievement, that which has been the most refuted so far is the common assumption that, if the language patterns of lower class Negro children deviate from those of educated American usage (which they usually do), and especially if they also deviate from even lower class white usage (which they usually do as well), this can be taken as evidence of the lower class black child's incomplete acquisition of fully structured or communicatively adequate language. That is, most educators and educational psychologists automatically assumed that the lack of skill which many Negro children demonstrated with standard English was in fact a lack of skill in handling language *per se*. Pronunciations like *nuttin'* or *nuffin'* for *nothing*, sentence patterns like *he workin'* for *he's working* or *we ain't go* for *we didn't go*, and word usages like *waste* for *spill* were all regarded as random errors in the stream of speech, the cause of which was laziness, carelessness, or underdeveloped audio-lingual skills. Accordingly, these "mistakes" were labeled "mispronunciations", "bad grammar", and "poor word usage", respectively. So certain were most educators and psychologists of the validity of their diagnosis of language containing such "mistakes", and so forceful and persistent were they in their condemnation of them, that those who normally spoke this way soon came to believe in the inferiority of their own speech. So today, one hears many Negroes refer to even their own nonstandard speech by such terms as "talkin' bad", "usin' bad grammar", or "talkin' broken English." Now, if these were random mistakes, reasoned the educators, then they ought to be corrected randomly. And correct them they did. The only trouble was that the corrections seldom worked, and were not easily extendable. One could tell a student that *he workin'* ought to be said as *he is working*, for example, and applaud the results when he promptly repeated the "correct" way. But then, when that same student took it upon himself to correct his usual *we workin'* to *we is*

working, the teacher would have to inform him that it was wrong. In the same way, a student would be rewarded for changing we ain't go to we didn't go, but faulted if he changed we ain't gone to we didn't gone. And, as if that weren't enough, the keen Negro-dialect speaker who grasped the fact that his ain't became didn't in standard English in some cases and haven't in others, and who then confidently corrected he ain't gone to he haven't gone would suddenly find to his dismay that that, too, was wrong. Thus, while the teachers continued to correct their Negro students' English, the students would continue to make the same old "mistakes" -- and sometimes a few new ones as well. Of course, prolonged educational failure of such magnificent proportions must inevitably become a public issue, and when it does, it requires either a solution or an excuse. And since the educators of Negro children hadn't been able to solve the language problem, they looked around for an explanation of it which would shift the blame away from the educational process. Some, particularly in the South, were inclined to resurrect the theory of genetic inferiority, and to apply it specifically to language ability.

Genetic explanations of the Negro's problems with school language were not popular in the North, however. Consequently, an explanation had to be found which would not place the blame on the school, but at the same time would not lay it at the door of black genetic structure. Ironically, the possibility of ascribing Negro language problems to genetic factors itself suggested a ready alternative. A debate had been going on for some time in the social sciences as to whether certain behavioral characteristics of human groups were predetermined by their genetic endowment or were simply a result of the workings of their environment. Environment, then, became the scapegoat for the low academic achievement of American Negroes. The problem was merely to find a way to blame language problems on the environment. This was done eventually by claiming that there were psychologically "unstimulating" environments which, because of a dearth of intellectual stimuli, failed to motivate language development in children raised in these settings. There was a tacit assumption, of course, that the environment of most lower

class Negroes was of this type. But, since language is very much a social phenomenon, it must have seemed a bit far-fetched, even to educators, to attribute a purported language deficit entirely to a poor physical environment. Something social was needed, and it was supplied by the widely-held-belief that children learned language entirely from adults. Since many lower class Negro families were known to be one-parent families, and since many lower class Negro mothers were thought to communicate less with their children than do white and middle class mothers, it seemed reasonable to conclude that there was a breakdown of the normal patterns of language transmission from parent to child among lower class Negroes. Consequently, social psychologists were able to furnish a pseudo-scientific justification that these students were "non-verbal," or "verbally destitute," or "poorly languaged," or "linguistically deprived." It should be noted that the traditional view of nonstandard Negro speech as made up of articulatory blunders, incomplete sentences, and a lack of vocabulary furnished a fertile ground for the sophistic theory that lower class Negroes failed to learn language at home.

If the view of nonstandard Negro speech as unstructured and the characterization of lower class black social life as non-verbal seemed reasonable to educators and psychologists, both seemed seriously wrong to linguists. At best, they did not accord with otherwise universal truisms about human language (or a variety of a language) without its own structure; they had never encountered a social group in which language did not play a central role, and was not transmitted from generation to generation. At worst, these assessments of Negro language and life stood as evidence of a lack of common sense as well as a lack of contact with lower class Negro life on the part of those who made them. The fact that lower class Negroes would make some "mistakes" in their English (e.g., they might say bofe for both or we tired for we are tired) but not others (e.g., they would never say boke for both or tired we for we are tired) should itself be clear evidence of structure in their language. Further, anyone walking down the street in a black ghetto, or passing by the playground of a predominantly

Negro school, could hardly avoid having his ears bombarded by the incessant chatter of supposedly "non-verbal" children. But if linguists were somewhat amused by the absurdity of the educationalist and social-psychologist views of why lower class Negroes were having language problems in the schools, they were very much alarmed by the widespread popularity of these views, and by their devastating effects on the self-respect and academic achievement of Negro students. Consequently, a few linguists began to intervene by presenting a structural-conflict model of Negro school-language failure, with derivative suggestions for curriculum reform.

To date, the linguistic contribution has involved proof of the linguistic integrity of nonstandard Negro dialect, through the description of many of its structural characteristics; suggestions for teaching standard English to speakers of Negro dialect, through the comparison of structural characteristics of the two forms of English; and a linguistic assertion of black identity, through the finding of evidence that Negro dialect evolved relatively independently from white dialects of English (Bailey, 1965; Dillard, 1964, 1968; Stewart, 1969a, 1969b). One thing linguists have not yet been able to do is agree on a single term for the nonstandard speech of black people. Negro dialect is the term most well established by past usage, while Black English now seems to be gaining currency. But other terms have also been used, such as Negro English, N.N.E. or NNE (standing either for nonstandard Negro English or for Negro nonstandard English), Black folk speech, and Black dialect. All of these terms have been used at one time or another by serious scholars, and each has its advantages and its drawbacks. Linguists have leaned toward Negro dialect because it parallels terms like Scottish dialect, and because dialect is the linguist's technical word for a language variety. Non-linguists, however, have been less receptive of terms containing this word, because of the somewhat derogatory connotation of dialect in popular usage. But then the terms Black English and Negro English, which avoid this problem, can too easily be taken as applying

to standard as well as nonstandard speech, just as long as it is used by black people. This allows those who happen to be ashamed of the nonstandard speech of lower class Negroes to dismiss it as broken and degenerate jargon, and to designate the standard English often spoken by educated Negroes as the "real" Black English. The one term which seems to avoid all of these difficulties is Black folk speech. It has its own drawback, however, which is that the word folk has enough of a rural suggestion about it to make the term awkward when applied (as it now frequently must be) to urban situations.

In spite of the terminological flux, however, and the occasional differences of opinion among linguists as to the best analytical procedures to use or the right interpretation of the data gathered, there is overwhelming evidence in support of the structural integrity of nonstandard Negro dialect. Not only has it been established that the dialect has a sound system and a grammatical structure of its own, but it has also been discovered that in certain ways its structure is even more communicatively efficient than that of standard English. For example, Negro dialect turns out to have a special use of be which indicates extended or repeated action, and a special use of been (usually stressed) to indicate the completion of an action in the remote past. Thus a speaker of Negro dialect would consistently distinguish between Dey be singin' in church (meaning that they are in the habit of doing it) and Dey singin' in church (meaning that they are doing it at the moment), or between I bought it (meaning that it was bought at some unspecified time) and I been bought it (meaning that it was bought long ago). In standard English, there is no grammatical way to make such distinctions; one can only say They are singing in church and I bought it, regardless of the intended precise meanings expressed in Negro dialect. Yet, even where Negro dialect and standard English might agree in the meaning expressed by a set of parallel grammatical constructions, there can be differences in the form of these constructions. For example, both Negro dialect and standard English have possessive constructions of the type noun-plus-noun, where the first noun refers to the possessor and the second noun to the thing possessed.

But while standard English requires the use of a special possessive marker (written -'s) at the end of the possessor noun in such constructions, Negro dialect does not. Accordingly, one must say my uncle's car in standard English, but may say my uncle car in Negro dialect, although the meaning of the two utterances is identical. Of course, there are also numerous grammatical constructions which are identical in both meaning and form in Negro dialect and standard English, such as the modification of nouns by adjectives placed before the noun. That is, one would normally say I live in a big house in both Negro dialect and standard English, but one would not say I live in a house big in either. (Negro dialect does indeed have a construction of the type my house big, but this is equivalent to standard English my house is big, rather than to my big house.) Of course, it goes without saying that linguists found both similarities and differences between Negro dialect and standard English in the matter of pronunciation, although such differences between the two kinds of English seemed to be greater than in the case of word-equivalents. In other words, it is more likely that Negro dialect and standard English will use the same word for a particular object, than that they will have the same pronunciations for that word. Although an obvious exception to this observation is provided by the frequent use of slang or "jive talk" by many speakers of Negro dialect, particularly in the larger cities, the vast majority of slang expressions may be unstable by their very nature, and thus not remain in use for long.[5]

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5. There is some doubt as to whether even those slang expressions which are used exclusively by Negroes ought to be considered a characteristic of Negro dialect as such, since they are generally absent from rural varieties of Negro dialect, while in urban ghettoes they may occur together with the pronunciation and grammar of either Negro dialect or standard English. It is probably best to consider Negro slang a separate entity from Negro dialect, with the understanding that the two are often used together.

To the linguists who studied black language usage, the pedagogical implications of many of their findings seemed obvious and incontrovertible -- even when these went against established educational views, which indeed they often did. For example, before the linguistic intervention, and in response to their own appraisal of the special language problems of lower class Negro school children, a number of prominent educational psychologists had urged the creation of language-enrichment programs for such children during the pre-school years. In the view of these psychologists, these programs were needed to offset the failure of many Negro children to acquire, in their home environment, what were felt to be basic language skills. Yet linguists found that virtually all of the lower class Negro children whom they interviewed were fluent speakers of a structurally normal (though often nonstandard) variety of English (Labov, 1969). This meant that, no matter how emotionally appealing they might be, programs of the language-enrichment type were founded on a false premise. Since many language-enrichment programs were already beginning to fail, their proven linguistic inaccuracy could be a contributory factor to that failure; however, the pedagogical implications of linguistic findings on black language usage were by no means all so negative. For, in detailing many of the structural differences between Negro dialect and standard English, linguists were actually providing a blueprint for the development of special procedures for the teaching of standard English to speakers of the dialect.

In their pedagogical philosophy as well as in their content, these procedures were a far cry from the random correction of "mistakes" which had previously characterized the so-called "language arts" for Negro students. In recognizing that most of these "mistakes" were the result of confusion on the part of the learner between the structural patterns of his own dialect and those of standard English, the linguistic model of structural interference (i.e., the structural influence of one language or dialect on the comprehension or production of another) opened the way for the use in inner-city classrooms of modified foreign-language teaching techniques. Incorporating structural comparisons between the language of the learner and the language being

taught, these techniques had been developed originally for the teaching of such clearly "foreign" languages as Arabic, Chinese, and Spanish to speakers of English and, later, for the teaching of English to speakers of foreign languages. (This last application came to be known professionally as TEFL -- teaching English as a foreign language, TESL -- teaching English as a second language, or TESOL -- teaching English to speakers of other languages.) Although it was true that Negro dialect shared an infinitely larger number of structural features with standard English than did languages like Arabic, Chinese, or Spanish, the linguists pointed out that this merely made the areas of structural conflict that much more difficult for Negro students to overcome without pedagogical assistance. In learning standard English, the speaker of Arabic or Chinese would know from the start that he was faced with a language-learning problem, since it would be obvious that the language being learned was not the same as his own language. For the Negro-dialect speaker learning standard English, however, the very fact that what was being presented in school seemed similar to his own speech would tend to convince him that he already knew the intricacies of the school language. For the English-speaking learner of Spanish, it soon becomes obvious that Spanish has two different equivalents of the verb to be: ser and estar. It is obvious, not so much because these verbs have somewhat different meanings, but rather because they sound and look different -- both from each other and from English to be -- and because they inflect differently. However, for the speaker of Negro dialect, whose is and be are different verbs with different functions, it is by no means obvious that is is merely an inflected variant of be in standard English. Nor, in fact, is this likely to be any more obvious to the teacher. For, if standard English has the verb forms be and is, and the Negro student is observed to have them in his own speech as well, then one might easily assume that he uses them just as they are used in standard English. Other differences, even when involving nothing more than simple inflectional variations, could be just as confusing. The Negro student's here it is matches standard English, but his here dey is does not; his he don't want it is at variance with standard English, while his we don't want it is not. Because of the subtlety of the structural

relationships between Negro dialect and standard English, the average black student simply could not be expected to perceive with complete accuracy exactly where his dialect leaves off and the standard language begins. Indeed, this may be one reason why waves of foreign immigrants, speaking languages like Italian, Yiddish, and Ukranian, have been able to acquire standard English within one or two generations in the United States, while American Negroes have not been able to do so as completely over a much longer time span.

Another pedagogically important fact which emerged from the linguistic research on Negro dialect was its relative uniformity throughout the United States. Sometimes obscured by age, sex, and socioeconomic differences within a single community, the underlying uniformity of Negro dialect from region to region became apparent as soon as these social variables were controlled for. Thus, nonstandard dialect with essentially the same structural characteristics was reported in use by young, lower class Negro males in such far-flung urban centers as Washington, Harlem, Chicago, San Antonio, and Oakland. Not surprisingly, these characteristics also were found to be prevalent in the nonstandard speech of Negroes in the rural South. Minor variations in pronunciation, grammar, and idiom did indeed occur, but the variations within Negro dialect seemed to be of less pedagogical importance than those differences from standard English (and even from white nonstandard speech) which proved so characteristic of Negro dialect. For example, in the so-called Gullah or Geechee variety of Negro dialect spoken in and around Charleston, South Carolina, one might say <u>we house</u> where speakers of other varieties of Negro dialect would, like speakers of standard English and white nonstandard dialect, say <u>our house</u>. Yet Gullah shares with other varieties of Negro dialect virtually all of the structural features mentioned earlier, plus many more. Such features distinguish Negro dialect from both standard English and white nonstandard dialect of whatever type. To the linguists, the pedagogical significance of this state of affairs was the possibility it would provide for developing language-arts material with an extremely wide applicability. It also meant, of course, that separate research programs would not be needed in each and every Negro community in the United States; the scientific findings for one community would be likely to have a high degree of

validity -- and therefore of pedagogical applicability -- in other communities throughout the nation.

Finally, of the various pedagogical recommendations which were made by linguists who studied Negro dialect, there was one which stemmed less from their immediate research than from their professional view of the basic equality of all varieties of human speech, and their knowledge that it was commonplace for people to learn and use two or more varieties of a language. This was the recommendation that Negro dialect be accepted side-by-side with standard English in the classroom. Some linguists felt that this should be done only in the early grades, and only as a way of relating standard English to the pre-school language of black children. Others, however, envisioned the eventual retention of Negro dialect as a pedagogical companion of standard English through the secondary level, and perhaps beyond. At first, this recommendation was limited to oral usage. More recently, a few linguists have begun to consider the use of a written form of Negro dialect as a device in beginning reading instruction for those black children whose knowledge of standard English proves inadequate for decoding traditional reading texts (Baratz and Shuy, 1969).

If the pedagogical implications of the linguistic research on Negro dialect seemed obvious and incontrovertible from the start to most linguists, they nevertheless appeared decidely radical and controversial to many educators and educational psychologists. The reason was that the linguistic view of nonstandard speech in general, and the linguistic findings on Negro dialect in particular, clearly argued against certain social beliefs, theoretical assumptions, and methodogical traditions which were a part of the American educational heritage.

Perhaps the most controversial findings to emerge from this linguistic research was that Negro nonstandard dialect was different from white nonstandard dialect -- even in the Deep South. Moreover, research on the history of Negro and white dialects in North America revealed that they had always been different. This obviously meant that a white-black dichotomy in American language usage was as old as the earliest settlement of the colonies by

European and African stock. Given that this was true for language, it was very probably true for other kinds of cultural behavior as well. But in the view of many socially-liberal educators, this was an uncomfortable conclusion because it attacked the cherished melting-pot image of American society, in which foreign immigrants were supposed to be culturally transformed into Anglo-Saxon-like Americans within one or two generations. And, as has already been mentioned, American Negroes were often pointed to as exemplifying the most complete transformation ever affected by the American melting pot. Because it had become scientifically taboo to admit to racially or ethnically-correlated behavioral differences, the entire educationalist rhetoric on the achievement problems of Negro school children had been adjusted to the strictly monocultural perspective implicit in the melting-pot image. And since it was an unwritten rule of this perspective that behavioral differences between black and white children had to be denied, ignored, or attributed to some sort of abnormal (i.e., neither natural nor permanent) cause, it was most convenient for educators to accept the environmental-pathology model furnished by the psychologists as an explanation for the endemically low school-language performance of black children. It was on this model, then, that the educators had based virtually all of their remedial methods for dealing with Negro children who had language problems in school. Yet, here were the linguists saying that nonstandard Negro speech was fully developed and well-organized language, and thereby refuting the entrenched language-pathology model. What was still worse, these linguists were saying that nonstandard Negro dialect was not the same as nonstandard white dialect, asserting thereby that the American melting pot had lumps in it, and that one of these lumps was black! It soon became apparent to many educators that if they accepted the linguistic view of Negro dialect, with its obvious pedagogical implications, they would be acknowledging the refutation of their entire approach to the education of American Negroes. Some educators were able to do this without misgivings, but others were not.

For those who were unwilling to accept the linguists' conclusions with respect to the uniqueness of Negro dialect, and who wanted their opposition to appear reasonable to impartial observers, it was necessary to find a way to dismiss the linguistic findings

on the dialect as something other than empirical data. A possible way of doing this was suggested by the striking similarity between the transcriptions of Negro dialect published by the linguists and the kind of Negro dialect one could find in the older plantation literature. Given this resemblance, it was easy for opponents of the linguistic viewpoint to make the charge that the linguists (who were mostly white) had drawn their material, not from the real speech of black people, but from the traditional stereotype of their speech. Although those who made this charge were correct in discerning a similarity between the linguistic transcriptions of Negro speech and traditional literary Negro dialect, they were quite wrong in assuming that the former was a copy of the latter, or that the latter was entirely artificial. In general, the older plantation literature was written by whites who had been born and raised on plantations, and who had learned the dialect in childhood from Negro playmates (who often were their only playmates) on the plantation. Thus, even if slightly concentrated at times, the Negro dialect found in the plantation literature was a fairly accurate rendition of the actual speech of plantation fieldhands. The reason why the up-to-date linguistic transcriptions of the speech of lower class urban Negroes appeared so similar to the plantation dialect was simply that modern urban Negro dialect was a direct descendent of plantation Negro dialect.[6] This fact might be an uncomfortable one for those who can see nothing but degradation and pathology in the black plantation experience; however the problem lies there, and not in the linguists' reliance on the literary representation of an older form of Negro dialect.

While objections to the linguistic description of Negro dialect focused initially on the question of black-white differences,

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6. Virtually any attempt to transcribe the nonstandard speech of lower class black children will result in a text which looks very much like the kind of literary Negro dialect one finds in the older plantation novels and reminiscences. In part, it may be this similarity which sometimes prompts the charge of stereotyping; the implication is that the linguists have "made up" their transcriptions by relying on the linguistic characteristics of the

this did not remain the central issue for long. After all, differences between black and white children in school-language performance were a matter of record, and therefore required some sort of explanation. The language-pathology model advanced by the psychologists had of course been an attempt to furnish one, but its validity had been seriously challenged by the linguistic evidence. Thus while the language-difference model might be less compatible with the assimilationist values of most educators than its psychological predecessor had been, it was still infinitely more comfortable for explaining black-white differences in academic achievement than the remaining alternative: the genetic-inferiority model.

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older literary stereotype. Those who make such a charge are perfectly right in concluding that there is a relationship between modern linguistic transcriptions of Negro speech and literary Negro dialect; it is just that the relationship is not the one they think. What causes the similarity between the two types of dialect is that both are relatively accurate renditions of forms of speech which are quite closely related -- the plantation dialect of yesterday being nothing more or less than the direct ancestor of the inner-city Negro dialect of today. What may be surprising to dedicated enemies of the Plantation Negro stereotype is that its perpetrators, the slaveholders of antebellum days, were usually quite accurate in their literary use of Negro dialect. This was recently demonstrated statistically by a feature analysis of a representative piece of plantation literature written in Negro dialect, which was checked against linguistic transcriptions of inner-city Negro speech. The plantation novel (Dooley, 1906) was written by the daughter of a Virginia slaveholder. Counting 54 phonological (as determined by the spelling) and grammatical deviations from standard English occurring in a randomly selected passage of the work, 45 of these were found surviving in the modern inner-city dialect. Of the nine remaining features, six were found in linguistic transcriptions of modern rural Negro speech, while the remaining three turned out to be archaisms which were formerly present in the speech of rural whites as well as Negroes. In other words, the writer had invented nothing, and modern inner-city black children have lost but little of the linguistic reality she portrayed.

A CULTURAL-CONFLICT MODEL

Since school-language problems tend to go hand-in-hand with the other problems which characterize the endemic academic underachievement of American Negroes, it seems worthwhile to reconsider the overall problem in terms of the linguistic findings on Negro dialect and their pedagogical implications. Yet to do this is in effect to entertain still another etiological model -- a cultural-difference or culture-conflict model -- as an alternative to the genetic and environmental-difference models which educators and social scientists have heretofore relied upon to explain Negro academic underachievement. For, if it is the case that much of the Negro's poor school-language performance derives from a subtle yet persistent language conflict, then it could well be that the poor performance of Negroes in other educational domains is also due to systemic conflicts between their own cultural norms and those of the school.[7]

Against this line of reasoning, one might argue that the finding of system and competence in the verbal behavior of "deprived" Negroes does not necessarily mean that other aspects of their behavior are also systematic and competent. In other words, even if the nonstandard speech of Negroes has been shown to be normal, other aspects of their behavior could still be pathological. The weakness of this argument lies in its failure to take into

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7. For present purposes, it is possible to ignore the highly complex question of whether (and, if so, how much) linguistic skills may relate to cognitive skills which traditionally have been considered non-linguistic. It should be pointed out, however, that even if the relationship were proven to be negative, the analogical implications of school-language problems for other kinds of academic problems would still hold; while if the relationship turns out to be positive, the implications thereby become direct.

account the fact that there is no more evidence that a people can be culturally pathological than there is that a people can be linguistically pathological. (If one works through the reasoning of many advocates of Negro cultural deficit, it turns out to be entirely circular; the assumption that Negroes are culturally deprived provides the example of a culturally-deprived population, which then makes it seem plausible that Negroes could be culturally deprived. Until it was refuted by linguists, this same kind of reasoning supported claims of verbal deprivation in Negroes.) Furthermore, since one's language is in fact a part of one's culture, proof of linguistic normalcy is to a certain extent also proof of cultural normalcy.[8]

In a related vein, one might argue that the finding of linguistic differences between Negroes and whites does not mean that Negroes and whites differ culturally in other ways. In other words, even if Negroes are different from whites linguistically, they might still be otherwise culturally similar. Although this argument avoids the issue of cultural pathology raised by the preceeding argument, it is nevertheless similar in failing to appreciate the

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8. Theoretically, the three etiological models (i.e., the genetic-difference, environmental-difference, and cultural-difference models) are not entirely incompatible. That is, one could easily imagine two populations which would differ from each other genetically, culturally, and because of adaptive responses to different physical environments. The point of the present paper, however, is that American Negroes are culturally distinctive in many ways, and conflicts between their norms and those of the school account for a good part of their awkward performance in academic situations. Once that point is made, then the issue becomes one of determining where (if at all) the cultural-difference model does not apply to Negro academic-achievement problems. This, of course, drastically shifts the burden of proof from advocates of the cultural-difference model to those of the genetic and environmental-difference models.

interaction between one's language and the rest of one's culture. This interaction is such that evidence of linguistic differences between two populations is highly suggestive of the existence of other cultural differences between the same populations. Further, non-linguistic cultural differences between Negroes (particularly lower class ones) and other segments of the American population can be observed in a wide range of lifeways and behaviors, including body postures, gestures, dancing and musical styles, dressing patterns, and forms of worship, to name just a few. Obviously, cultural differences between black and white include far more than just language. The retort might then be that, since not all Negroes speak or act alike, and indeed since not all whites speak or act alike, one cannot infer cultural or linguistic differences between the two groups. But this is like saying that, since not all Frenchmen speak or act alike, nor all Germans, one cannot infer cultural or linguistic differences between Frenchmen and Germans!

A few scholars (not necessarily anthropologists or linguists) have occasionally come quite close to the cultural-difference model in attempting to explain Negro academic achievement problems. One case in point would be the sociologist Robert Ezra Park, who almost made the connection between school problems and the relationship of the curriculum to the culture of the student. Through extended contact with Negro education (deriving from his academic position at Fisk University), Park had become acutely aware that there was a strong tendency for Negro students to engage in rote learning. So impressed was he by the importance of this phenomenon, that he devoted an entire article to it (Park, 1937). He was particularly intrigued by the fact that rote learning was also endemic in schools in colonial situations, where the schools represent one culture and the children another. Park concluded that "Rote learning is likely to occur in schools where the standards are 'high' or where the tradition, language, and learning of the school is so different in form and content from the ordinary experience of the ordinary student that he is unable to interpret what he learns in school in terms of the language and tradition of the community in which he lives." Therefore, rote learning, as he put it, "had its sources in the historic condition under which

Negro education has grown up in the South." But then, right on the verge of discovering, by induction, the distinctiveness of American Negro cultural patterns, and their implications for Negro education, Park stepped back into familiar deficit theory with a conclusion that the problem existed because "the majority of Negroes have started life at a lower cultural level than the majority of the white people."

Yet Park was quite correct in perceiving a similarity between the education of Negroes in the United States and the education of people who are under colonial domination. In both cases, an educational system which represents the dominant (colonizer) group in structure and content is extended to a subordinate (colonized) population whose language and culture that educational system may only partially represent, or not represent at all.[9]

It is currently fashionable to attribute wicked and nefarious motives to those who are presumed to have imposed their own educational system on alien peoples, though a number of disarmingly innocent reasons readily suggest themselves as to why or how this imposition might have taken place. One of these

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9. Of course, the language and culture of even the most folksy American Negroes are nowhere near as different from American mainstream language and culture as are, for example, the languages and cultures of African tribal peoples from those of their European colonizers. Nevertheless, the dynamics of the relationship between the dominant and subordinate languages and cultures remain quite similar in the two situations. Furthermore, even in form, these two extremes are linked together by situations involving intermediate degrees of contrast. An example would be the juxtaposition of official European and unofficial "creole" languages and cultures in the Caribbean.

reasons could simply have been the principle of least effort; an educational system had already been developed for internal use by the dominant group, and it proved much easier to transfer the same system to other groups than to develop entirely new systems for special cases. Another possible reason (a highly probable one, whenever people are involved) might have been ignorance; the dominant group simply may not have known enough about a subordinate group to devise an educational system especially for it, even if this were considered desirable. But the most likely reason why one group might have imposed its own educational system (or any other aspect of its culture) on others would be ethnocentrism; the dominant group, precisely because it was the dominant group, would feel that its language, its culture, and its social institutions were more advanced, more legitimate, and more viable than those of a subordinate group. From this point of view, to bequeath the dominant culture to subordinate groups was not an imposition; it was the fulfillment of a Civilizing Mission. Whether one "civilized" in Africa or "uplifted" in America, the act could be gratifying to those who gave -- and sometimes even to those who received.

Indeed, one of the factors which has contributed to the perpetuation of a culturally-foreign school curriculum in post-colonial areas (such as Africa and the Caribbean), as well as in the post-Emancipation United States, is that, whenever and wherever a dominant group's culture has been imposed on a subordinate group, there have always been individuals in the subordinate group who have taken readily to the dominant culture, and who have benefited (in their relationship to members of both groups) from their acquisition of it. This minority is then viewed as exemplary by the dominant group (which is, of course, always looking for justifications for its Civilizing Mission). In fact, the same minority may even be considered exemplary by other members of the subordinate group who, perhaps smarting from feelings of inferiority concerning their own culture (another product of the Civilizing Mission), may feel compelled to compensate by pointing to the ability of at least some of their members to become "civilized".

Applied to the American case, this may explain in large part why intuitively-motivated attempts to develop a curriculum

for lower class Negroes based on (or at least starting with) their own behaviors has never met with much acceptance. Significantly, the principal efforts in this direction were made before the Reconstruction period -- that is, before Negro education became institutionalized. The first such attempt appears to have occurred in the eighteenth century, when Anthony Benezet set up a special school in Philadelphia for the education of Negro slaves. Perhaps because some of these slaves were actually Africans, or perhaps because he perceived the quasi-foreign nature of the language and behavior of American-born Negro slaves, Benezet taught standard English to his black pupils as though it were a truly foreign language to them. Although, from reports, Benezet enjoyed considerable success with his approach, it was not carried on by others after his death.

The next attempt to recognize the language and culture of lower class Negroes in teaching them occurred a century later in the Freedmen's schools which, as noted, were set up in the conquered territories of the South during the Civil War. Those volunteer teachers who were sent to the Carolina and Georgia Sea Islands could not help but notice the cultural foreigness of the Gullah Negro children they were supposed to teach. Consequently, a few volunteer teachers in this region began to look for ways to relate the traditional curriculum to the language and lifeways of their pupils. One of these teachers quickly recognized the language problem facing both teacher and child, and advocated that teachers of Negro children learn the latter's dialect (Botume, 1893). This same teacher even attempted to use her pupil's distinctive nicknames on the class roll, once she discovered that they used these to the exclusion of their formally-given names. But, with the end of the Civil War, she and her fellow volunteers returned to the North, and their insights and innovations went with them.

In the post-Reconstruction South, Negro education soon came almost completely under the administrative as well as pedagogical control of the Negro middle class. Typically, superintendents were white and all professionals below that

level were black (i.e., the supervisors, principals, and teachers). Rejecting the experimental curricula of the white-conducted Freedmen's schools, with their implicit (and sometimes explicit) recognition of the Negro child's own culture, this new class of Negro professional educators substituted a curriculum which was in fact a meticulous copy of the white school curriculum. The keynote of Negro education became that of "uplifting" the child, where to "uplift" meant to imbue him with white values, behaviors, and language, and to suppress non-white values, behaviors, and language whenever these seemed to interfere with the "uplifting" process. Ironically, in becoming administratively black, Negro education became culturally white.[10]

In conclusion, there seems to be a wide range of evidence--comparative as well as specific, historical as well as contemporary, and scientific as well as impressionistic -- that culture conflict is an important factor in the endemic academic underachievement of American Negroes. Of course, it is quite probable that it is not the only factor; it is even possible that it is not the single most important factor. But, as a plausible explanation of Negro academic underachievement, culture conflict has been ignored by educators and social scientists to a degree which can have no basis in its hypothetical

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10. Sad to say, this situation has changed not at all in the intervening hundred years. In fact, Negro educators (including educationally-oriented black militants and community leaders) can still be heard advocating programs to "uplift" their children. Indeed, if one thinks about it, there is an uncanny resemblance between the "uplifting" concept of traditional Negro education and the "enrichment" concept of many of the currently-operating intervention programs. Perhaps this explains why such programs are so popular with black parents and community-control groups.

relative importance to other factors. Indeed, the fact that cultural variables are easier to perceive, isolate, and manipulate than genetic or environmental ones in experiments with human beings stands in dramatic contrast to the fact that the genetic and environmental-difference models have been applied exhaustively in the search for the causes of Negro academic underachievement, while the cultural-difference model has never been seriously applied to that end.

Reasons have already been suggested for the existence of this theoretical imbalance. They can be summarized (or, rather, their effect can be generalized) by saying that it has been controversial to use a cultural-difference model in dealing with American Negroes. This has been the case to date, and there is every indication that it will continue to be so in the future.

This situation poses something of a dilemma for those social scientists who are dedicated to helping Negro children achieve satisfactorily in school. For, if cultural differences between Negroes and whites account at least in part for their different performance in school, then it is unlikely that efforts to raise the level of Negro academic achievement will be successful as long as cultural factors are ignored. Perhaps, now that a base for the recognition of pedagogically-relevant cultural differences has been made by linguists, it may be that social scientists from other disciplines will venture to make use of the cultural-difference model without quite as many self-doubts. Given what is now known about the effect of cultural differences on education involving other groups (such as American Indians), the most promising directions for culture-comparative research on Negroes and whites would seem to be in learning and heuristic styles, verbal and non-verbal communication styles, and the all-important domains of folk-ethics and folk-epistemology.

For a while, however, most social scientists will probably prefer to stay within the bounds of environmentalism in their search for the causes of Negro academic underachievement. The social penalties for failing with an environmental-difference model are still less severe than those which would accompany success with a genetic-difference or cultural-difference model.

But, in the face of so important and persistent a problem as the educational failure of Negroes in America, it is difficult to see how this can long remain the case. There must be a point at which the cruelty of deception exceeds the cruelty of truth, so that the latter finally becomes the less disagreeable alternative. That point seems to be rapidly approaching in social-science research on Negro academic underachievement as it becomes increasingly clear that attempts to treat Negro cultural traits as if they were social pathologies are not likely to be successful.

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